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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/725,567

12/03/2003

Stephen Burany

9351-322

4014

1059

7590

12/29/2005

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EXAMINER

TSO, EDWARD H

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2838

DATE MAILED: 12/29/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/725,567

Applicant(s)

BURANY ET AL.

Examiner

Edward H. Tso

Art Unit

2838

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-32 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-32 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____. | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____. |

DETAILED ACTION

Information Disclosure Statement

The IDSes filed 6/18/04 and 7/26/04 have both been considered and placed of record. The initialed copies are attached herewith.

Specification

The disclosure should be carefully reviewed to ensure that any and all grammatical, idiomatic, and spelling or other minor errors are corrected.

Claim Objections

Claims 2, 9, 10, 18, 25 and 26 are objected to because of the following informalities. Appropriate correction is required.

Regarding claims 9 and 25, the term "the plurality of cell groups" on lines 2-3 lacks proper antecedent basis. It is more appropriate to describe it as just --plurality of cells--.

Regarding the other claims, the term Vss has no description in the claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

Art Unit: 2838

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1, 9, 17 and 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by James (US 6,140,820). The reference discloses a monitoring system for a fuel cell stack having multiple cell groups wherein a minimum cell stack voltage is measured (column 2, line 27); minimum cell group voltage is collected and the lowest voltage maybe extrapolate from these voltages (column 4, lines 25-30).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 3-8, 11-16, 19-24 and 27-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over James (US 6,140,820).

Regarding claims 3, 4, 11, 12, 19, 20, 27 and 28, the reference does not disclose an alarm and/or shutting down the cell stack when the voltage is below the threshold. It is a common knowledge in the art to provide an indication to a user that the cell life is approaching depletion via an audio tone and sometime follows with a shut down command. All cellular phones and portable computers have these features. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have built-in these features, since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice. *In re Leshin*, 125 USPQ 416.

Regarding claims 5-8, 13-16, 21-24 and 29-32, the reference does not disclose the any specific value. However, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have selected any appropriate value including Applicant's value, since it has been held that discovering an optimum value of a result effective variable involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Boesch*, 617 F.2d 272, 205 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980).

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 2, 10, 18 and 26 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

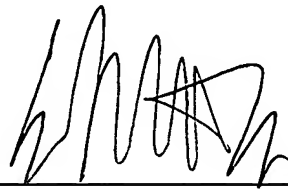
Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication should be directed to the Examiner at the below-listed number on every Monday, Thursday and Friday.

If attempts to reach the Examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the Examiner's supervisor, Karl Easthom, can be reached at (571) 272-1989 on Monday-Thursday.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application should be directed to the receptionist at (571) 272-2800, Monday-Friday, 8:30am to 5:00pm, EST.

By:



EDWARD H TSO
Primary Examiner
(571) 272-2087